

FUTURE SENSITIVITY OF DEMOCRACY

17 June 2019 | Turku Main Library, Studio (Linnankatu 2)

Should democracies be more future sensitive?
Can political institutions be designed to care about the future?
Has democratic deliberation capacity for future-making?

PROGRAMME

13:00 Welcome

13:00 **Mark E. Warren** (University of British Columbia):

Rethinking the future sensitivity of democracy through the all affected principle

Discussant: **Simo Kyllönen** (University of Helsinki)

14:00 Coffee

14:30 **Graham Smith** (University of Westminster):

The legitimacy of independent offices for future generations

Discussant: **Maija Setälä** (University of Turku)

15:30 Break

15:45 **Nicole Curato** (University of Canberra):

Future-making as practice of public deliberation

Discussant: **Henri Vogt** (University of Turku)

16:45 Closing remarks

ABSTRACTS

Professor Mark E. Warren (University of British Columbia):

Rethinking the future sensitivity of democracy through the all affected principle

The principle that all those affected by a collective decision should be included in the decision is long-standing, dating at least back to the Justinian Code (V,59,5,2) in Roman private law: “what touches all must be approved by all.” Over the last several decades, the idea has migrated into democratic theory, often without much remark, almost as if this principle of inclusion stands as common sense, with little need of specification and justification. This principle, however, is increasingly in conflict with what has emerged as the standard view of inclusion dating back to the democratization of modern nation-states. Entitlements to a say over collective matters should follow membership of living adults. Yet justifications for democratic inclusion based on membership are increasingly undermined by a combination of changing ethics and developing social and political entanglements, both territorial and temporal. Collective decisions (or collective neglect) by living members of a polity impacts capacities for self-government—the democratic agency—of those beyond both political and temporal borders. In this talk, I argue that explicitly rebuilding democratic theory around the All Affected Principle will help to sensitize polities to those kinds of affects that undermine or support the capacities of those beyond borders—jurisdictional and temporal—to decide their futures.

Professor Graham Smith (University of Westminster):

The legitimacy of independent offices for future generations

Independent offices for future generations (OFGs) are rare amongst institutional designs that aim to increase the future sensitivity of democracy in that they have been institutionalized in a (small) number of democratic polities. Drawing on the experience of the Israeli, Hungarian and Welsh Commissioners for Future Generations, the paper argues that an OFG faces at least two challenges to its legitimacy. The first relates to its capacity to adequately represent the plurality of interests within and across future generations. The second to its political fragility; its capacity to become a stable and influential part of the democratic infrastructure. The paper develops the apparently counterintuitive argument that both aspects of legitimacy can be enhanced through embedding systematic public participation in their decision-making processes.

Dr Nicole Curato (University of Canberra):

Future-making as practice of public deliberation

My presentation proposes the concept of ‘future-making’ as central of the everyday practice of public deliberation. By future-making, I refer to the ways in which political communities imagine, propose and contest their collective aspirations. For deliberative democracy to overcome the illiberal present, I argue that emphasis must be placed not only on citizens’ capacity for inclusive and authentic deliberation, but also in their capacity to aspire and develop the political agency needed to achieve their visions. Without this capacity, deliberative politics is limited by paralyzing and uninspiring pragmatism. Deliberative democracy, I argue, is hinged on the expectation that citizens who discuss the future have the power to shape them.

The perspective I offer in this presentation is based on five years of field research in communities affected by natural disasters and violent conflict in the Philippines. I offer ethnographic portraits demonstrating how vulnerable communities develop capacities to aspire amidst trauma and widespread suffering. My presentation also discusses the seemingly mundane yet behavior-shaping practices that hinder the pursuit of deliberative futures.